

**CALLIRHOË;
FAIR ROSAMUND**

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Callirrhoë; Fair Rosamund by Michael Field

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MICHAEL FIELD

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FAIR ROSAMUND.

BY

MICHAEL FIELD.

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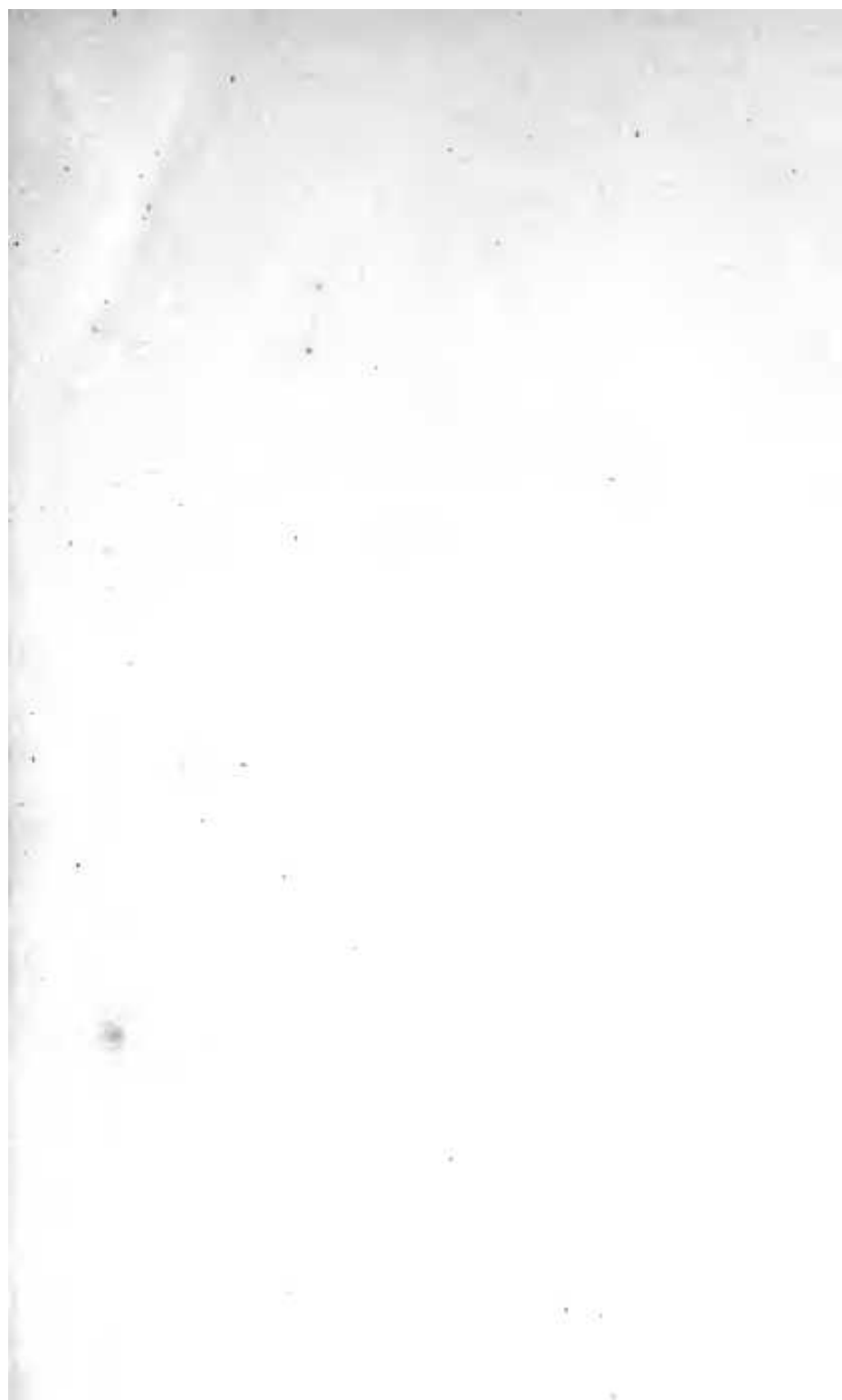


CALLIRHOË.

A DRAMA.

“To make the heart a spirit.”—*Childe Harold*,
Canto iii., stanza 103.

MICHAEL FIELD.



P R E F A C E.



BEFORE the bar of Time this poem pleads guilty to anachronism. The establishment in Greece of the worship of Dionysus reaches back into the dateless vistas of legend. The Author has so far defied Cronus, that he has represented this foreign cult struggling for recognition in the midst of a refined and even sceptical Hellas. Mighty voices excuse him, which have prevailed in silencing the accusations of "old Time"; he is their client. Euripides puts the language of a sophist in the lips of pre-historic heroes. Virgil makes Æneas and Dido contemporaries.

The Author would here remark that his account of the rise of the drama is purely imaginative and unhistorical.

The story of Callirhoë is drawn from a classic source, but has never been raised from obscurity by ancient bard or dramatist. This fact has permitted a latitude of treatment, unstrained by the fear of presumption. Greek men and women are approached, not from the

CALLIRHOË.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Temple of Bacchus, Calydon. Anaitis and other Mænads asleep on the steps. Enter Coresus.*

Coresus. She sleeps: what wearied wildness in that
arm

That crowns the head above the twisted vine's
Noon-faded leaves! Spent agitation gives
Strange calmness to her face. There is no calm
Like that upon the sea after the wind
Hath frenzied its blue breast,—as prophecy
The bosom of a Pythoness,—and passed.
She wakes and gathers up diffused dark limbs,
Springing from slumber as a wild beast springs
Forth from its lair.

Anaitis. Coresus!

Coresus. Snatch not up
The thyrsus with so tremulous a grasp!
To-night there is high revel in the hills,

Mystic assembly in the deep recess
 Of cloven altitudes ; meanwhile, for rest
 The women lie in heaps about the court,
 Their dappled fawn skins laid aside for heat,
 Their ruined wreaths of scarlet briony
 And fennel-staves lying athwart the limbs,
 That gleam the clearer in the glow of sleep.
 So shall they stay till eventide. What dream,
 Anaitis, thus hath broken thy repose ?

Anaitis. A dream I had—the altar !—Drops of gore !

Coresus. Ay, thou rememberest how the hinds were
 torn

In the last chase. Dione cried to see
 The fleecy fringes of her nebris dyed
 In blood, and fled. Then didst thou catch her hair,
 And sling her, as a slender ivy-wand,
 Amid the bloody fragments. Thought of this,—
 Her horror, thy o'erhasty violence,—
 Hath trampled with rough footstep on thy rest.

Anaitis. It was the altar : one for sacrifice
 Was kneeling.

Coresus. Yea, Dione, suppliant
 Beneath thy chastening hand.

Anaitis. Dione ! No.
 It was thy blood, Coresus, was the priest's !

Coresus. Would the god suffer it ? Anaitis, wake,
 Be sober ; I have work for thee to do !
 Go forth, and to the maids of Calydon
 Break the rich tidings that I bore to thee.